



وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا يَا وَلِيَّ الْعَرْشِ اذْكُنَا

Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) said

الْعِلْمُ مُصْبَاحُ الْعَقْلِ

Knowledge is the lamp of wisdom*

ADL

* Ghurar al-Hikam, Vol. 1, P. 43

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Allah hasten his reappearance)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى وَبِذِكْرِ وَلِيِّهِ

Preface

The Adl syllabus has been developed by the Association of Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) for its religious classes. We have taken great pains to ensure that the syllabus conforms to the Holy Quran, traditions of the Ahle Bait (peace be upon them) and the books of respected Shiite scholars.

While we have tried our best to make the syllabus as accurate as possible, we will appreciate if our readers come forth with valuable suggestions for the improvement of the same and point unto us our shortcomings.

At the end, we beseech Allah, the Almighty, to hasten the reappearance of Hazrat Imam Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance). May He include us amongst Imam's (may Allah hasten his reappearance) most sincere companions. May He grant us success in preparing the ground for Imam's (may Allah hasten his reappearance) earliest reappearance.

Aameen.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ يَا وَلِيَّ الْعَصْرِ (عج) أَذْرُكُنَا

Chapter 1

The Historical Importance of Adl

One of the most hotly debated discussions from the early history of mankind and one of the central points of argument since the inception of Islamic history has been Divine Justice. Whenever man became a victim of difficulties and natural calamities, he was trapped in a dilemma i.e. to cling on to his faith in God and at the same time, not to attribute the execution of these actions towards God, for they considered God to be too magnanimous and high to perform such destructive acts. Therefore, to solve this dilemma, they started believing in ‘types of gods’ (one god for each action) or in dualism (god of good and god of bad). They attributed such acts of destruction towards the god of destruction or evil, or devil or god’s competitor etc. Since religions or manmade schools of thought could not solve the matter of Divine Justice in its true sense, they either denied the Unity of God or subscribed to the belief of compulsion.

Islamic history too could not remain unaffected by this belief. After the martyrdom of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), the strategy used by the enemies of Islam against the Caliphate of Ali (peace be upon him) dealt such a

tremendous blow that the Muslim Ummah was deprived of knowledge as also spiritual and social leadership of the true inheritors of the prophetic knowledge. As a result, the Muslims were unable to seek refuge in a source where they could find solutions for ambiguous Quranic verses, spiritual difficulties and doubts concerning faith. They sunk deeper in the quicksand of spiritual deviation and the darkness of wrong beliefs. Over a period of time they realised that there was no way to get out of this quicksand.

Things got worse when the Muslims began to have face to face debates and discussions against non-Muslims like Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Greek philosophers and ascetics. The difference of cultures and civilisations added more spice to such debates and discussions.

Amongst the questions and objections concerning belief, the most important question was that of Divine Justice (Adl). There were different arguments and various opinions. The foundation of all these disgruntlements was the above-mentioned problem. In an effort to seek the solution to this problem, many opinions and schools of thought came into existence, which over time laid the foundation of various sects in Islam of which the Sunni branches of 'Motazelah' and 'Ashairah' are of paramount importance. While the former believed in absolute freedom (تفويض), the latter had faith in compulsion (جبر).

Chapter 2

The Concept of Adl and its Importance

In Arabic lexicon, the word ‘Adl’ has been defined thus – ‘to put a thing in its place’ وَضَعَ الشَّيْءَ فِي مَوْضِعِهِ and ‘to give a person his due’ اَعْطَاءُ كُلِّ ذِي حَقٍّ حَقَّهُ. Therefore, a teacher who gives more marks to a weak student and lower marks to an intelligent and hardworking student has done injustice to the latter and is not just and fair because the appropriate place of the weak student is failure while that of the intelligent and hardworking student is success.

Justice and oppression are natural concepts which every human is aware of. Everyone, on account of his nature, loves justice and hates oppression.

Man’s nature can never accept a god who has not been just to His servants and creatures and instead oppresses them.

Oppression and injustice are the consequences of defects, weaknesses, lust for fame and other short-comings, while the Holy Being and Existence of the Almighty is free from all defects and mistakes.

To deny even one of the results of the belief in Adl is like denying the concept altogether and those results are as follows:-

- (1) Before meting out any type of punishment, making people aware of the same is essential. Hence, if God punishes His servants without making them aware of the consequences of their actions, then it would be injustice to them.
- (2) Punishment is only for voluntary actions. Therefore, if a person executes an action involuntarily or is forced to do so and it is beyond his control to refrain from that action, then punishing him would tantamount to injustice. This point lies at the root of all discussions on Adl. All questions on freedom of action, compulsion and man's role in his own actions emerge from this point.
- (3) Reward and punishment being according to the action is among the results and consequences of divine justice.
- (4) Fulfilment of promise is another necessity of Adl and a proof of divine wisdom. This becomes clear when one refers to the literal meaning of justice (as we have already mentioned i.e. 'putting a thing in its place' and 'giving one his due' are the main criteria). There is no other proof required for this as the literal meaning of Adl is sufficient to establish this point. Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (peace be upon both of them) and Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him), both have described Adl eloquently in a very brief tradition:

الْعَدْلُ أَنْ لَا تُتَّهِمَهُ

Adl is that you don't accuse Allah (of being an oppressor by attributing to Him any wrong deed

*committed by humans).*¹

Allah should not be considered as an oppressor or tyrant. If someone does not believe in this, then he is accusing Allah of oppression and tyranny.

Although Adl is one of the many attributes of Allah in the Shiite school of thought, it is enumerated independently along with Tawheed. The reason for this speciality and importance is that Adl is the base for 'Prophethood' and 'Qiyamat'. One of the important proofs for Qiyamat is the establishment of Justice between a believer and a disbeliever. Since Allah the Almighty is Just, hence Qiyamat becomes a necessity. Also, since Qiyamat means questions and answers, how is it possible to ask questions without first warning the people of the same? Thus, divine justice and belief in Qiyamat form the basis for the belief in Prophethood. And Imammat is the actualisation of the aims of Prophethood. In the light of this discussion, belief in Adl gives rise to three principles of religion. We have studied in the previous chapter that since people could not solve the problems concerning Adl, they got inclined towards disbelief, dualism and polytheism. Hence Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) has clearly spelt out the two foundations of religions as follows:-

إِنَّ أَسَاسَ الدِّينِ التَّوْحِيدُ وَالْعَدْلُ

*Surely the foundation of religion are Tawheed and Adl.*²

¹ Nahj al-Balaagha, Saying No. 470

² Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 5, p.17 narrated from Tawheed and Ma'aani al-Akhbaar

Chapter 3

Ashairah and Motazelah

After the martyrdom of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), the problem which boggled the people's minds, was that of predestination (تقدير). If the Almighty has already decreed the acts of every human being, then how is it possible for man to act on his own free will and authority? That is to say, it is difficult to believe in man's free will along with the belief in predestination. This is because if God has already destined man's every action, then the question of exercising free will or authority does not arise. Although, this was a question related to man's intellect and had a great influence on the Muslims, the politicians of that era, taking undue advantage, added to the confusion and increased the doubts to the greatest possible extent. They misinterpreted this belief (in predestination). They suggested that the Almighty has programmed all of man's actions. This misinterpretation was the best possible excuse for all their misdeeds.

Therefore, when the Ashaab-e-Jamal questioned Ayesha for waging a war against Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and thereby shedding the blood of thousands of Muslims, the response they received was, "This was destined by God and to

execute God's programmes, there are some agents and causes".¹

Or when people protested against Umar Ibn Saad as to why he killed the grandson of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), Imam Husain Ibn Ali (peace be upon both of them), for no reason, the only answer which he could give was, "It was destined from the heavens. I am sorry to kill him. I spoke to my cousin Husain Ibn Ali (peace be upon both of them) concerning the actualisation of destiny but he refused to accept it."²

Or when Muawiyah appointed Yazeed as his successor and took allegiance from the people, some objected to this act of imposing a lecherous ruler upon the Ummah, prominent among them being Ayesha and Abdullah Ibn Umar. Muawiyah justified his devilish act by saying, "Yazeed's caliphate is among those things predestined by God and when something is predestined by the Almighty, people have no say in it."³ There could not be an easier way to escape from responsibilities.

Anyhow, since the Muslim Ummah did not refer to the divinely appointed infallible Imam (peace be upon him) and kept him aloof from all social activities, they were stormed with the problems of the intellect and things reached to such limits that majority of the Islamic community started believing in predestination. The scholars of Ahle Hadees propagated this idea even more and spread it to the greatest possible extent.

¹ Taareekh-e-Baghdad, vol. 11, pg.160

² Tabaqaat-e-Ibn-e-Saad vol. 5 pg. 110

³ Al-Imamah wa al-Siyaasah, pg. 182-187

But to ascribe all our acts, particularly those of oppression and tyranny to predestination by Allah and misinterpreting predestination in such a manner that man's freedom is snatched away from him, did not find many takers from the learned and intelligent people. This misinterpretation, apart from being contrary to human nature, also produces three negative results which are as follows:

- (1) This misinterpretation acquits all oppressive and tyrant kings of their misdeeds of oppression, injustice, destruction, etc. Also it puts the entire blame on God for their misdeeds. We have explained this in the second chapter.
- (2) If man is helpless and is only busy fulfilling heavenly destinies and has no free will or authority in it, then why were all the Prophets and Messengers (peace be upon them) sent? Did they try to change the 'predestination' of Allah? One who is predestined to be a disbeliever, why did they call him towards faith and belief?
- (3) If Allah is the actual executor of man's actions and man is only a medium in this process of predestination, then why is a disbeliever and a transgressor condemned and why is a believer praised? Also if everything is predestined, then how is the belief in the Hereafter and its questioning justified?

Although this misinterpretation of predestination was thoroughly propagated by the Ahle Tasannun, who were encouraged in this regard by the rulers and kings of their time,

yet a group called Motazelah opposed this idea tooth and nail. But in their diehard approach, they went to the other extreme by denying any divine involvement in human actions. They propagated the idea of “absolute freewill” (تفويض) and hence were also famous by the name ‘Mufawwezah’.

- (4) They (معتزلة), in their effort to purify God from sins and release Him from the responsibility of man’s misdeeds, began to believe in the absolute freedom of man, i.e. God has no authority whatsoever, over man’s action. In order to purify God from sins, they went to the limits of polytheism. That is why they were also called as أَهْلُ تَنْزِيهِ.

This group came into existence in the second century of Hijrah due to the efforts of Waasil Ibn Ataa (died 131 A.H.) and Amr Ibn Ubayd (died 144 A.H.). It received the political backing during the reign of Abbaside caliphs, Mamoon, Motasim and Waasiq and spread rapidly. As a result, their opponents had a very rough ride during this period. But during the reign of Mutawakkil, the whole scenario changed completely. There was an all out war of faith against the Motazelah and once again the political field became clear for the believers in predestination. On the other hand, as the Motazelah lacked political backing, had weak and objectionable points in their opinions and denied predestination outright (which was against Quranic verses and Prophetic traditions), their school of thought became weaker by the day and by the fourth century of Hijrah, were totally uprooted. Finally, in the fourth

century of Hijrah, they were replaced by the Ashairah where the opinion of the scholars of Ahle Hadees had come in a new form.

The Ashairah were totally inclined towards Tawheed. To keep themselves protected from the polytheistic ideas of Motazelah, they attributed all their actions, good or bad, to God and considered man as a helpless creature. The man was only a tool in the hands of God through whom He executes whatever He pleases. In their concern for polytheism, the Ashairites unwittingly walked into the clutches of disbelief (كفر). They strictly opposed those who considered that God did not - intervene in man's good or bad deeds (i.e. God's intervention). But the worst part is that they even ascribed oppression to God by believing that whatever bad deeds are done by God through men He will punish them in Hell for those acts.

After the defeat of the Motazelah, the Ashairah (founded by Abul Hasan Ashari) remained in the forefront due to the backing which they received from the rulers and kings. At present, the majority of Sunnis believe in this faith. All their four sects Hanafi, Hanbali, Maaleki and Shaafe'i are the followers of the Ashairah, although, the Wahhabis are nearer to the Ahle Hadees in their principles of religion.

The Ashairah school of thought was founded by Abul Hasan Ashari. Hence, its followers are called the 'Ashairah'.

The period extending from the first century till the fourth

century, rather even beyond that, was dominated by debates and discussions on freedom of human actions and predestination. Both groups have advanced their theological arguments in support of their own beliefs. In these arguments, the focus of the Ashairah was Tawheed and the rejection of Shirk in the regulation of the universe. On the other hand, the Motazelah argued in favour of man's free will in their bid to purify Allah from man's unjust actions. In these discussions neither group could present irrefutable arguments to convince the other side of their own views.

Abu Is'haaq Asfaraani (died 418 AH) is considered to be among the frontline Ashairah scholars; he was a major proponent of Tawheed-e-Af'aali. Once Abu Is'haaq was seated next to the influential scholar of the Bani Abbas era – the author of Ubbaad. At that moment the great Motazelah scholar – Qazi Abdul Jabbaar (died 415 AH) walked in. When Qazi saw Asfaraani, he protested by reciting this statement:

سُبْحَانَ مَنْ تَنَزَّاهُ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ

‘Glory be to the One who is pure from all indecencies.’

Through this statement, Qazi wished to protest against the Ashairah belief of ‘Tauheed Afaali’ (i.e. only Allah is source of all actions, including indecencies). Abu Is'haaq was quick to respond with:

سُبْحَانَ مَنْ لَا يَجْرِي فِي مُلْكِهِ إِلَّا مَا يَشَاءُ

‘Glory be to the One without whose wish nothing can transpire in His Kingdom.’

Abu Is'haaq implied that you believe that man is able to perform an act against Allah's Wish.

There are numerous instances of such discussions where neither group could advance conclusive arguments to convince the other group. More than anything else, these debates were reduced to raising objections against one another, the reason being both groups were flawed in their beliefs.

Chapter 4

Some Discussions on Differences

The Ahle Hadees and Ashairah have interpreted (rather misinterpreted) the meaning of Taqdeer (predestination) by putting the onus of human actions on God, thereby laying the foundation of a new school of thought that was completely opposed to the Motazelah school in various principles, some of which are as follows:-

1. Whether God is executor of human action? Or man is himself responsible? Ashairah believe in the former while Motazelah in the latter.
2. Are human actions confined and limited by predestination and that predestination alone is the cause of human action?

The Ashairah believed in the above idea while the Motazelah rejected it outright.

3. Is man a victim of divine coercion (force) in his action? Or is he free? The Ashairah believed in man being bound while the Motazelah considered him to be absolutely free.

Therefore, the Ashairah, on account of these three

principles, faced stiff opposition from the Motazelah and every rational person. If God is the creator of human actions, then on what basis can He punish the sinners and reward the virtuous? Will it not be a futile exercise from the viewpoint of both the disbeliever (including oppressors, tyrants and transgressors) and the believer? Does man's wisdom not reject such views? Is it appropriate for God to do such things?

As a reply to such objections, the Ashairah began presenting arguments and justification instead of rectifying their beliefs. They argued:

- i) Our wisdom does not have the right to form opinions where God's actions are concerned. Our wisdom is not the standard for a thing to be good. On the contrary, whatever God does is good and correct. If God throws the believers in hell and the disbelievers in heaven then it would not be unjust for God to do such a thing; because He has done it, it becomes just. The verdict regarding good or bad given by our wisdom is not connected with God.

This discussion is famous as "Merit and Demerit: Sharii or Rational?" (حسن وقبح: عقلي يا شرعي). The Ashairah consider Merit and Demerit to be Sharii while Motazelah deem it to be rational.

- ii) As mentioned above, according to the Ashairah, our wisdom is not the standard of measure but

the action of God is. Therefore, if God punishes a disbeliever or transgressor on account of the sins which He Himself has committed, it is not oppression. Since God has done it, hence it is justice per se. Thus, apparently the Ashairah do believe in divine justice (Adl) but the way they interpret it, is in fact nothing but tyranny and oppression from every facet. Hence, the Motazelah are also called as “Adliyyah” and Ashairah, their opponents.

Chapter 5

Shias vis-à-vis Ashairah and Motazelah

During those times of deviation and confusion, our infallible Imams (peace be upon them) while fulfilling their responsibilities of guidance, protection of religion and preventing the believers from straying, propagated the truth and provided answers for all doubts and queries that would arise in the near or distant future. They filtered the pure from the impure incessantly; they kept on condemning the ideas of compulsion (جبر) and absolute free will (تفويض). They explained the Shiite viewpoint in different ways and methods when compared to these two schools of thought. Therefore the famous tradition

لَا جَبْرَ وَلَا تَفْوِيضَ بَلْ أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ الْأَمْرَيْنِ

“There is neither compulsion nor free-will but an affair distinct of these two affairs”

is found in both Shia and Sunni books in different wordings. This tradition has been narrated by Imam Ali, Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (peace be upon them).¹

¹ Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 5, pg. 12 narrated from Oyoono Akhbaar al-Reza

Our Imams (peace be upon them) have severely criticised the Ashairah belief of compulsion and deemed it to be in direct contrast with the Holy Quran and traditions. They have termed it as disbelief. We present a few of their objections hereunder:

1. In the light of Quranic verses and prophetic traditions, man is the creator of his deeds and is responsible for them. Allah interferes neither in the creation of his actions nor their execution.

Allah the Almighty declares:

كُلُّ امْرٍءٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ

Every man is responsible for what he shall have wrought.¹

This verse proves that Allah is not responsible for man's sins. He is too Pure to be associated with such accusations. To correlate man's sins with Allah's actions is disbelief of the highest form.

2. Man is free in his actions. This freedom is granted to him by Allah the Almighty. Based on this freedom man can perform any action to the extent that he can even disobey Allah.

Allah says in Surah Haa Mim (41), verse 17:

وَأَمَّا تَمْؤُدُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَبْىَ عَلَى الْهُدَى

(peace be upon him)

¹ Surah Tur (52): Verse 21

And as for Samood, We guided them but they chose error above guidance.

3. Predestination is a reality, but it is not the cause of human actions. It does not compel man to act in a certain manner; rather man is free to act as he likes. Predestination means that Allah, has prior knowledge of how man will act based on his own free will. This means that predestination is not compulsion as it does not compel man to act against his free will.
4. (In contrast with the Ashairah view), good and evil is not legislative (شَرْعِي) but based on intellect (عَقْلِي). Many things that are considered good and evil are apparent to the intellect and denying them amounts to denying the apparent. For instance, goodness and obligation are good and tyranny is evil. Good and evil being legislative (شَرْعِي) is against intellect because legislation (شَرْع) itself is based on rationality.
5. Allah has rejected تَكْلِيفٌ مَّا لَا يُطَاقُ (Responsibility beyond capacity) in the Holy Quran in Surah Mominoon (23): Verse 62 and has deemed it as oppression. He has clearly distinguished between the disbeliever and believer and the corrupt one and the reformer in Surah Saad (38): verse 28. Therefore to claim that good and evil is legislative is against Allah's saying and contrary to the Holy Quran.

Although the Shia, like the Motazelah, believe in divine justice and consider good and evil related to the intellect and believe that man is free in his actions, they

are distinct from the Motezelah. The Shias believe that the Motezelah doctrine runs contrary to the Holy Quran and Sunnah. They consider the Motezelah beliefs to be polytheism (شرك). They object to these beliefs on the following counts:

1. To reject predestination is against the Holy Quran and Sunnah. Many Sunni and Shia traditions consider predestination as a necessary belief of religion.
2. To consider man as completely free in his actions amounts to rejecting Allah's authority. By according man complete freedom in his actions, they have removed man from Allah's domain of control; they have restricted Allah's authority. Whatever action man performs, it is only with the intention and power granted to him by Allah. Whenever Allah wants, He can intervene and revoke that intention and power. The intention and power of man takes precedence over Allah's intention and power; therefore the belief in total freedom for man (تفويض) is incorrect.

Imam Jafar Sadiq (peace be upon him) while comparing all the three schools of thought (Motezelah, Ashairah, Shia) says:

النَّاسُ فِي الْقَدَرِ عَلَى ثَلَاثَةِ أَجْزَاءٍ:

In the matter of predestination, people are divided into three types:

رَجُلٌ زَعَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَجْبَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَى الْمَعَاصِي

فَهَذَا قَدْ ظَلَمَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِي حُكْمِهِ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ

One thinks that Allah compels man to sin (then He will punish man for that sin). Then certainly he has attributed Allah with oppression in His Judgement, and he is a disbeliever (i.e. the belief of Ashairah).

وَرَجُلٌ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّ الْأَمْرَ مَفَوَّضٌ إِلَيْهِمْ فَهَذَا وَهَنَ اللَّهُ
فِي سُلْطَانِهِ فَهُوَ كَافِرٌ

And another person thinks that all the affairs have been delegated to mankind. This person has considered Allah weak in His Authority and is a disbeliever. (like the Motazelah)

وَرَجُلٌ يَزْعُمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ كَلَّفَ الْعِبَادَ مَا يُطِيقُونَ وَلَمْ
يُكَلِّفْهُمْ مَا لَا يُطِيقُونَ وَإِذَا أَحْسَنَ حَمْدَ اللَّهِ، وَإِذَا أَسَاءَ
اسْتَغْفَرَ اللَّهُ فَهَذَا مُسْلِمٌ بَالِغٌ.

And one person (like the Shias) believes that surely Allah, the Almighty, has commanded man to perform only those actions that are within his capacity and has not commanded him to perform actions that are beyond him. Therefore when they perform a good action they praise Allah for it (for His Tawfeeq) and when they perform a bad

*action they seek Allah's forgiveness. He is a true Muslim.*¹

Imam Muhammad Baqir (peace be upon him) tells Hasan al-Basri:

إِيَّاكَ أَنْ تَقُولَ بِالتَّفْوِيزِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَمْ يُفَوِّضْ
الْأَمْرَ إِلَى خَلْقِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْهُ وَضَعْفًا، وَلَا أَجْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى
مَعَاصِيهِ ظُلْمًا.

*Refrain from believing in Tafweez (complete delegation of affairs to man). Surely, Allah, the Almighty, has not delegated the affairs to His creatures thereby rendering Him weak and helpless. And He has not compelled man to disobey Him thereby making Him an oppressor.*²

Both Imam Mohammad Baqir and Imam Jafar Sadiq (peace be upon both of them) have said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَرْحَمُ بِخَلْقِهِ مِنْ أَنْ يُجْبِرَ خَلْقَهُ عَلَى
الدُّنُوبِ ثُمَّ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا، وَاللَّهُ أَعَزُّ مِنْ أَنْ يُرِيدَ أَمْرًا
فَلَا يَكُونُ. فَسُئِلَا عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ هَلْ بَيْنَ الْجَبْرِ وَ
الْقَدَرِ مَنَزِلَةٌ ثَالِثَةٌ؟ قَالَا: نَعَمْ، أَوْسَعُ مِمَّا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ.

Surely Allah, the Almighty, is more merciful on His

¹ Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 5, pg. 9, 10 narrated from Khesaal

² Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 5, pg. 17 narrated from Ehtejaaj-e-Tabresi

creatures than that He should first compel His creatures to sin then punish them for it. And Allah is more honourable than that He should intend for a thing and it does not happen (as He wants it to happen). Then the narrator asked – Is there a third path between compulsion and total delegation? Imam (peace be upon him) replied – Yes, there is and it is vaster than the distance between the sky and the earth.¹

¹ Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 5, pg. 51 narrated from Tawheed

Chapter 6

The Moderate Path

Generally, the Shiite viewpoint on free will and compulsion is considered to be distinct and separate from the Ashairah as well as the Motazelah. It is also termed as ‘Amrun Bainal Amrain’ i.e. an affair distinct of the two affairs. As mentioned before, this statement is derived from various traditions of the infallible Imams (peace be upon them). By this they meant the absolute free will of the Motazelah and the compulsion of Ashairah.

Some people have interpreted ‘Amrun Bainal Amrain’ as follows:

‘In some cases, it means absolute free will while in others, it implies compulsion’. But this idea is not correct since the Imams (peace be upon them) have clearly stated that it is distinct from both of them. The right interpretation would be to keep away from both, free will and compulsion. ‘Amrun Bainal Amrain’ is not compulsion because:-

According to the Ahle Bait (peace be upon them) man has been given freedom and power by Allah and He granted man the liberty to select a work which he likes and which he does not.

If he does it then it is on account of his freedom and power and if he does not, then too he is free. This freedom and power is responsible for all his deeds, either good or bad. Hence, man becomes responsible for all his actions on account of his freedom and power. And never Allah, as the Ashairah say, is the agent of man's deeds through his limbs or never is Allah the creator of man's deeds (here, by creator we mean خالق/فَاعِل). Man performs through his intention and authority and he is responsible for his own deeds, not God. Thus, to reward a good doer and to punish a wrong doer is not out of place.

This interpretation is felt as correct by every human being instinctively. There is a difference between climbing down the mountain and falling from it, from diving into a swimming pool and being thrown into it, from conversing while awake and in sleep, from glass being thrown and falling down, etc. All the above examples are seen, felt and understood by us, in our daily lives. In all these examples, where man's intention is involved, he deserves some reward or punishment but in the latter examples, where man's actions are involuntary, he does not deserve any reward or punishment.

أَمْرٌ بَيْنَ الْأَمْرَيْنِ is not even absolute freewill for, the freedom, power, will, etc. which are found in man are granted to him by God and are not his own. Whenever Allah wills, He can snatch away this power from man. Despite having power and freedom, man can never go beyond the line of divine control. God's power and will are definitely dominant and superior to that of man. If man is able to commit a sin, it does not mean that he has superseded God's power and weakened His

authority. Nor can one say that God does not have the power to stop a sinner. We must put it this way that a sinner is committing sins on account of the power and will given to him by God and He has not snatched this power away. But it is because Allah has permitted man to remain free and powerful and has not taken back the gifted power and authority due to His prudence.

Therefore, man's freedom and power does not mean that he is absolutely free. But rejecting تفويض does not mean that man is forced to do things (جبر).

The following tradition was dictated by Imam Reza (peace be upon him) to one of his companions:

اُكْتُبْ قَالَ اللهُ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى: يَا بَنَ آدَمَ بِمَشِيَّتِي
كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الَّذِي تَشَاءُ لِنَفْسِكَ مَا تَشَاءُ، وَبِقُوَّتِي أَدَيْتَ
إِلَيَّ فَرَائِضِي وَبِنِعْمَتِي قَوَيْتَ عَلَى مَعْصِيَتِي

Write that Allah, Blessed and Exalted be He, has commanded: O, Son of Adam! By the will granted by Me (to you), you desire for yourself whatever you wish and by the power given by Me (to you) you perform for Me the duties recommended by Me and by the bounties (will, strength, etc.) bestowed by Me (to you) you are able to disobey Me.¹

The concept of this Hadees-e-Qudsi can also be found in other traditions narrated by the infallible Imams (peace be upon

¹ Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 5, pg. 56 narrated from Qurb al-Asnaad

them).

The narrator came to Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him) and to confirm his beliefs, explained his belief in divine justice in the following manner:

“I believe that God has commanded man to perform only those deeds which are within his capability and power. And whatever man does it is after the will, intention, decree and destiny of Allah.” Imam (peace be upon him), replied:

هَذَا دِينُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَأَبَائِي

This is the divine religion followed by me and my forefathers.¹

If you pay attention to the tradition, you will observe that the narrator has nullified compulsion in the first half of his statement and has refuted absolute freedom in the second half. Imam (peace be upon him) has approved his understanding of religion.

¹ Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 5, pg. 36 narrated from Kitaab al-Tauheed of Shaikh Saduq (may Allah be pleased with him)

Chapter 7

Objections against Divine Justice – Part I

Are Calamities Allah's Justice or Mercy?

Q.1 There is no doubt that calamities such as death, diseases, plagues, earthquakes, storms, wars, oppression, tyranny, etc. were common occurrences in the past as also in the present and affect many innocent people. Who is the cause of all these problems and difficulties? If it is God, then He is not Just and if it is not God, then it must be Shaitan proving thereby the theory that God does not hold power over the entire Universe. What type of governance is it that He cannot control these disastrous factors?

Answer:

1. (A) We should distinguish between natural calamities and wars, oppression, poverty, etc. which are the direct result of man's action. Earthquakes and storms are different when compared to war and corruption whose responsibility lays absolutely on man's shoulders, not God. Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ

Corruption has spread in the land and the sea for what the people's hands have earned.¹

- (B) In the light of Quranic verses and Prophetic and Imamite traditions, those calamities which are from the 'Takveeni' world are also a direct result of 'Tashreei' actions and deeds. Allah the Almighty says

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ.

And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and (yet) He pardons most (of your faults).²

- (C) Although calamities and difficulties act as a whip of God to punish man, there are various other benefits of calamities:
- i) For a believer, calamities are cause for the forgiveness of sins. For a disbeliever, they are reminders and a punishment. For the Prophets and their successors (peace be upon them), they serve to increase their degree and position near Allah.
 - ii) They are a source to attain proximity towards Allah and His remembrance. They lift the veil

¹ Surah Room (30): Verse 41

² Surah Shura (42): Verse 30

of negligence from man's nature.

- iii) Calamities build character. If difficulties and problems did not surround man, he would never have endeavoured to solve them by delving deep in knowledge and sciences. Calamities, problems and difficulties have forced man to go for newer inventions and discoveries.

Allah the High says,

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ
الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient.¹

Ameerul Momineen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (peace be upon both of them) says:

إِنَّ الْبَلَاءَ لِلظَّالِمِ آدَبٌ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِ امْتِحَانٌ وَلِلْأَنْبِيَاءِ
دَرَجَةٌ وَلِلْأَوْلِيَاءِ كَرَامَةٌ

Calamities are a reminder for the oppressor, an examination for the believer and (a cause for increase in) status for the Prophets and nobility for the friends (of Allah).²

¹ Surah Baqarah (2): Verse 155

² Behaar al-Anwaar vol, 78, pg. 198 narrated from Jaame al-Akhbaar

Allah the High elaborates the reason for punishing the Bani Israel with numerous calamities thus:

وَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

...and We overtook them with chastisement that they may turn.¹

- iv) Another objection is that large scale disasters afflict among others, innocent ones like the children and the pious for no fault of theirs. The reply to this is that when we believe in the Hereafter, it is assumed that they will get their reward on the Day of Judgement. So whatever difficulty they face in this world, will be converted into fantastic benefits in the Hereafter. On the same lines, the ease and comfort of the disbelievers in this world will be set off against a more difficult Hereafter. Keeping all these facts in mind, there is no room for any doubt whatsoever.

In brief, Islam has never held Shaitan or different gods responsible for calamities and problems. Islam believes in the unity of God in the world of creation and grace. It holds calamity as a direct punishment of God. And at the same time, there's not even an iota of doubt regarding the Justice of God.

Q.2 Is it not the demand of Justice that reward or punishment should be based on the direct action of man? In such a case, intercession is contrary to Justice

¹ Surah Zukhruf (43): Verse 48

as every evil person must go to hell under all circumstances and face its wrath?

Answer

To reward good doers is a prerequisite of justice. But to punish evil doers is not compulsory for a just person. If God punishes an evil doer, then it will be in exact conformation of justice but if He forgives a sinner then it will conform to His Grace and Nobility. Grace is superior to justice; it is not contrary to justice. Therefore, we invoke Allah thus,

رَبِّ عَامِلِنَا بِفَضْلِكَ وَلَا تُعَامِلِنَا بِعَدْلِكَ

O Lord! Deal with us with Your Grace and not with Your Justice.

- Q.3 You expect a just person to deal with everyone equally and not act unfairly. However, we see that amongst creatures generally and among humans particularly, there is a lot of inequality in aptitude, intellect, wisdom, memory, height, built, colour, wealth, poverty, family, etc. Is this not against justice?

Answer

1. You're right that the requirement of justice is to give every person his right (إِعْطَاءُ كُلِّ ذِي حَقٍّ حَقَّهُ) but creatures don't have any right over Allah.

For, the creatures did not exist at all; Allah granted them existence and raised them to various heights of

perfection. Therefore, creatures don't have any right over the Creator. If He gives someone more and the other less, then it means that somebody has got a greater share of His bounties and the other has not. Nobody has been meted out injustice. If someone gives one rupee to a beggar, one hundred rupees to another beggar, one thousand rupees to the third and offers nothing to the fourth, then has he done injustice to anybody? Has he trampled on anybody's rights? Definitely not! Because, if he has donated anybody anything, it is purely on account of his own grace and the deprived beggar enjoys no right to ask.

Apart from this, as per traditions, whoever has been bestowed with fewer bounties in this world will be given his due in the hereafter.

2. Allah, the All Wise, has established the regulations of this world on the basis of differences due to many reasons, some of which are as follows:-
 - i. Every system requires differences. If differences are not there, then the system will not work. If all the parts of a wrist watch are same in size and shape, can the watch work? Similarly, if everybody in the world had the same power, wealth, colour etc, was it possible for the world to function?
 - ii. These differences are also a source of examination. For example a beggar is patient on his poverty. A wealthy man helps the beggar. A

powerful man does not oppress the weak. The weak one fulfils his obligations despite the obstacles. In this way, everyone is tested and examined.

- iii. Differences and variations are also a cause of thanksgiving and worship. One of the best bounties of Allah is air but because this bounty is available everywhere and all the time, man has not taken any pain in obtaining this invaluable bounty; nobody really cares for or knows its importance. Allah has not distributed the bounties equally among the people; anyone who is being bestowed with more bounties should feel that he has received more and he should be thankful to Him. And the one who has received fewer bounties should ask more and invoke Allah in this regard. It is possible to increase the bounties through supplications.

Chapter 8

Objections against Divine Justice – Part II

- Q. How can we consider man to be free and powerful when Allah's knowledge precedes his action? That is, whatever we do, Allah knows it before hand.

Answer

Allah's knowledge is not the cause for man's actions. Allah's knowledge is the prediction of human actions with all its details; ultimately, man performs the action based on his own intention and freedom. For example, a teacher knows the ability and the capacity of each of his students and on account of this knowledge labels them as good or bad. But this labelling or knowledge of the teacher is not responsible for the passing or failing of a student in the examination. Passing or failing depends on the hard work and effort a student puts in his studies. The teacher had only announced his assessment beforehand due to his knowledge of the students.

- Q. Keeping in mind that Islam believes in divine predestination of man, how can man be called as free?

Answer

It is not that there can be no change in divine predestination – Qaza and Qadar. One of the important beliefs in Shiaism is ‘Badaa’ which means change or alteration in predestination. Allah the High says in Quran,

يَمْحُو اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيُثَبِّتُ وَعِنْدَهُ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ

Allah erases (from predestination) whatever He wishes and Allah puts whatever He wishes and with Him is the Mother of the Book.”¹

In this verse, two treasures of knowledge are discussed. One is Ilmul Kitaab (علم الكتاب) or Lauh-e-Mahv-o-Ithbaat (لوح محو واثبات) and the other is Ummul Kitaab (أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ) or Lauh-e-Mahfooz (لوح محفوظ). In Lauh-e-Mahvo Ithbaat, initial predestination is discussed, while all changes and alterations are included in Lauh-e-Mahfooz. In other words, Ilmul Kitaab does not contain the knowledge of whatever will be changed while Ummul Kitaab does.

The knowledge of the unseen (عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ) of the angels and Prophets is connected with the Ilmul Kitaab while Allah has not given them unrestricted access to Ummul Kitaab. Prophecies are based on Ilmul Kitaab which is perfect according to the initial predestination. But, if there is any alteration in the predestination, the prophecies will not come through.

¹ Surah Ra’d (13): Verse 39

Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq (peace be upon him) informed:

“Once, when Hazrat Isa (peace be upon him) was passing by a house along with his disciples, they heard the noise of music, singing and dancing from it. He (peace be upon him) said,

Tomorrow, there will be mourning over here.

The next day, when they passed from that house, there were no signs of mourning. This matter was reported to Hazrat Isa (peace be upon him) who in turn asked Hazrat Jibraeel (peace be upon him). Jibraeel (peace be upon him) answered:

*Whatever you had predicted was about to occur and it was decided that a serpent would sting the bride and the groom, resulting in their deaths. But last night, the bride while standing at the door, fed a beggar and gave charity. On account of this noble action, Allah changed His decree.”*¹

A similar incident is narrated from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny).²

To spend in God’s way, to perform good actions, invocations, supplications, asking forgiveness, observing bond with relatives, etc. are some of the causes which alter divine decree.

¹ Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 4, pg. 94 narrated from Al-Amaali of Shaikh Saduq (may Allah be pleased with him)

² Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 4, pg. 121 narrated from Tafseer al-Ayyaashi (may Allah be pleased with him)

Hence, decree and predestination are not certain and unchangeable but alterable. When Ameerul Momineen Ali (peace be upon him) was returning from the battle of Siffin, one of his companions asked him:

“Was our battle against the Syrians decreed?” He (peace be upon him) replied:

Yes, O Shaikh! You do not step on any door or enter in any room but everything is according to divine decree and destiny.

On this the narrator questioned: “It means that our effort will yield no reward?” He (peace be upon him) answered,

مَهْلًا يَا شَيْخُ، لَعَلَّكَ تَظُنُّ قَضَاءَ حُكْمًا وَقَدَرًا لَا زِمًا لَوْ
كَانَ كَذَلِكَ لَبْطَلَ الثَّوَابُ وَالْعِقَابُ وَالْأَمْرُ وَالنَّهْيُ
وَالزَّجْرُ.

Keep quiet, O Shaikh! Perhaps you have considered decree and destiny to be certain and unchangeable. If it was like that the reward, punishment, command, prohibition and admonishment, everything would have become void.¹

Therefore, we see that decree and destiny are neither absolutely certain and unchangeable nor the cause of compulsion. Divine decree and destiny keep on changing according to the character

¹ Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 5, pg. 13 narrated from Oyoono Akhbaar al-Reza (peace be upon him)

and action of man. Allah the Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition.¹

Q. If man's actions are voluntary then what is توفيق and خذلان?

Answer

توفيق means the provision of conditions by Allah for any man to perform an obligatory act or refrain from a prohibited one. توفيق does not mean جبر (compulsion). A good friend, an understanding teacher, a good book, a believer brother etc. are some of the توفيقات which help man to perform good and leave evil. توفيق is like a mountain slope which eases man's descent. One, who is descending, is he doing so on his own free will or is he being forced to do so (by the slope)? He is doing it on account of his own free will. Of course, this slope is only helping him to come down safely and easily.

خذلان means not to put obstacles in the path of sins. It does not mean to prepare ground to commit sins. Rather, it means lack of Tawfeeq to leave the sins. Imam Sadiq (peace be upon him):

When a slave acts according to the commands of Allah, his actions are in conformation with divine orders... But if a slave intends to disobey and Allah creates some obstacles between him and his sin

¹ Surah Ra'd (13): Verse 11

which he intends to commit, then leaving this sin also would be on account of divine Tawfeeq. But if Allah does not create any hurdle between the slave and his intended sin and he commits that sin, then it means that God has degraded him (خفان), not helped him and not given him the Tawfeeq to leave that sin.¹

- Q. A corrupt and immoral society, wrong upbringing, incorrect training etc. are factors which prepare a ground for committing sins. Is not man a victim of psychology and environment?

Answer

There is no compulsion or force on man from either psyche or environment. All these things that are presented as compulsion of environment and psyche are all in “appropriate proportion”. The person who commits sins due to being affected by a corrupt society, is he like that person who is thrown from the mountain or is he like that person who has descended on account of his own free will although his descent has been made easy due to the slope of the mountain? Every man’s conscience will bear witness that the latter example is more appropriate. A corrupt society makes sins easier but does not force it upon the man.

May Allah the High include us amongst the servants and helpers of Imam-e-Zamana (may Allah hasten his reappearance)! Aameen.

¹ Ma’aani al-Akhbaar, pg. 21